

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 212801
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S E C R E T STATE 212801

EXDIS FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 4840 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, AMMAN, CAIRO, LONDON 21 AUG 78

QUOTE S E C R E T BEIRUT 4840

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, PINS, PINT, LE, SY

SUBJECT: HOSS ON HOSS-ASSAD DISCUSSIONS AT LATTAKIA

REF: BEIRUT 4782

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR WAKEFIELD CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER
AL-HOSS AUGUST 20 TO FIND OUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED AT HOSS-
ASSAD TALKS IN LATTAKIA. HOSS SAID HE HAD PRESSED THE
SYRIANS HARD ON THEIR REACTION TO CHRISTIAN MILITIA
SNIPING BY DISPROPORTIONATE BOMBARDMENT, WHICH WAS DIS-
ASTROUS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF POLITICAL OBJECTIVES.
THE SYRIAN REPLIED, WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO? THE MORALE

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OF AN ARMY REQUIRES THAT IT FIRE BACK WHEN FIRED UPON,
EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. THE

SYRIANS CONTINUED, IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER TAYS TO DO
IT, OR ANY OTHER TARGETS, LET US KNOW; IF WE CAN
ATTACK THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN SOME MORE DIRECT WAY,
RATHER THAN BY SIMPLY BOMBARDING THE SUBURBS FROM

WHICH THEY ARE SNIPING, TELL US. HOSS SAID HE
COULD NOT REPLY TO THIS SINCE IT IS A POLITICAL
DECISION WHICH MUST BE LEFT UP TO SARKIS. BRITISH
AMBASSADOR DID NOT PURSUE THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE WITH
HOSS SINCE NEEDLESS TO SAY WAKEFIELD DID NOT WANT TO
APPEAR TO BE INVOLVED IN SUCH A POLITICALLY LOADED
SUBJECT.

2. HO ALSO TOLD WAKEFIELD THAT HE HAD HELD A LONG
DISCUSSION WITH THE SYRIANS ON THE NEED FOR SOME FORM
OF "POLITICAL ADVANCE." HOSS WAS NOT SPECIFIC, BUT
SAID THAT HE AND SARKIS ARE IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT THAT
THERE IS NO USE TRYING TO FORM ANOTHER GOVERNMENT
BEFORE FORMULATING THE POLITICAL POLICIES ON THE
BASIS OF WHICH THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ASKED TO
SERVE. THESE ARE TO BE ENUNCIATED BY PRESIDENT SARKIS,
WHO WOULD THEN FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT. MEANWHILE, HOSS
IS WORKING HARD ON THE PROJECT. ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL
SIDE, HOSS TOLD WAKEFIELD HE IS IN FAVOR OF A CERTAIN
DEGREE OF DECENTRALIZATION, GOING FARTHER THAN THE
MINIMAL METHODS ORIGINALLY THOUGHT OF AT THE TIME
OF SARKIS' ACCESSION, BUT NOT REPEAT NOT AS FAR-
REACHING AS THE SWISS CANTONAL MODEL.
KINSOLVING

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER
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